

No Bull Allowed: Bull Marketing Basics

by Sara Gugelmeyer



When marketing anything, there's no contest that the most important thing is to sell what your customers want to buy. Obviously, that's how you get customers and that's how you keep them coming back year after year. Marketing bulls is no exception.

That's why it's key to know what customers prefer in an ideal bull — one they're willing to pay top dollar for. Determining what age your bull buyers are looking for is vital to any seedstock operation. And for many, this may mean having different ages to choose from at marketing time, whether it's a production sale, open house or just a time when most people stop by to look.

Russ Tegtmeier of Tegtmeier Polled Herefords, Burchard, Neb., sells to a variety of customers, so he offers 18-month-old and 2-year-old bulls, which are primarily purchased by commercial cattlemen, at his production sale. And he also offers a few select yearlings targeted more toward purebred operators.

For him, this works the best because his customers are able to select bulls from the age group they prefer. Tegtmeier says, "Some want a 2-year-old that can handle 30-35 cows in a bigger pasture, and

others are happy with a fall 18-month-old bull on 20-25 cows in a smaller pasture."

He adds most of his commercial customers would not be comfortable turning out a yearling bull with that many cows and that much distance to travel, so selling 18-month-olds and 2-year-olds is necessary for his market.

The same philosophy is true for a variety of bull traits, so the bottom line is to visit with your customers and see if there is anything they would like in a bull that you're not providing. In fact, visiting with your customers is a great idea and should be done more than once a year at bull-buying time.

Taking the time to build a personal relationship with your

customers in any sector will be well worth the time. It not only encourages them to keep buying, but it also allows you to learn more about their wants and needs so you can better serve them.

Finally, an excellent way to increase awareness about your breeding program, and gather data to use

as proof of your bulls' superiority, is with bull tests. Not only do bull tests give the breeder valuable information on his program, but many tests also have associated sales, which can really help market your animals, especially if you don't already have an established sale or marketing avenue. See Page 47 for a list of articles related to marketing bulls. **HW**

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